

Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Fact Sheet

What is SAIL?

While there exists no widely accepted system for summarizing hospital system performance, VA has created SAIL, the Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value Model, to distill salient information from a large number of individual metrics. SAIL is a web-based, balanced scorecard model that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is developing and continuously improving to measure, evaluate and benchmark quality and efficiency at medical centers.

- SAIL is designed to offer high-level views of health care quality and efficiency, enabling executives and managers to examine a wide breadth of existing VA measures.
- The underlying data on which SAIL is based are identical to those available through other Veterans Health Administration (VHA) sources such as: Linking Knowledge and Systems (LinkS), ASPIRE, VA Inpatient Evaluation Centers (IPEC), Performance Management, and Office of Productivity, Efficiency, and Staffing (OPES). This is also the same data used to provide transparent information about quality at individual VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) to Veterans and the public at www.va.gov/qualityofcare.

Why did VA develop and deploy SAIL?

- VA designed SAIL specifically for internal benchmarking within VHA, to spotlight successful strategies in order to promote high quality, safety, and value-based health care across all of its medical centers.
- While other measurement models in VA and the private sector assess and score health care facility performance, SAIL encompasses many more metrics and offers custom views of information to help VA users pinpoint strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- As SAIL's name indicates, it is oriented to support improvement and learning; this is consistent with VHA's vision of "learning, discovery and continuous improvement".

How many VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) are included in the SAIL database?

Currently, VA has 150 operating VAMCs. SAIL data includes the 128 VAMCs that provide acute inpatient medical and/or surgical care to Veteran patients, and the attached report also includes data from 19 facilities that do not have acute inpatient medical and/or surgical care (i.e., Ambulatory Care Centers, Rehabilitation Centers, and Outpatient VAMCs)

What exactly does SAIL measure and how?

- SAIL assesses 25 Quality measures in areas such as mortality, complications, and customer satisfaction, which are organized within eight domains (See Appendix A for full list)
- In addition, SAIL includes another measure to assess overall Efficiency (the Efficiency domain).
- SAIL draws data from existing measures prepared by VHA Program Offices and VA national databases for inpatient and outpatient encounters and facility characteristics.
- SAIL is VA-specific and intended to suggest areas of focus. While many of the measures are consistent with those reported in the private sector, others are unique to VA and have not been as thoroughly validated.
- SAIL allows individual VAMCs to assess their performance for each measure by comparing their results with those achieved by similar facilities by percentile ratings. The benchmark is the performance achieved by the top 10 percent of similar facilities.

What makes SAIL different than other health care quality measurement tools?

- Like other recognized industry models such as the *Truven Health Analytics Top Health Systems Study*, SAIL assesses performance of VA Medical Centers on quality measures recognized as significant by the health care industry.
- Benefitting from VA's versatile data systems, SAIL improves upon other health industry report cards that limit the assessment to inpatient care quality by:
 - o Incorporating additional metrics on health care quality, employee satisfaction, access to care, and efficiency (See Appendix A); and
 - o Assigning a weight to each of the 26 metrics and dividing them into nine domains; eight domains represent health care quality and one represents efficiency (See Appendix A).
- As part of the largest integrated health care system in the United States, each VAMC is organized slightly differently to best serve our nation's Veterans health care needs, and SAIL is designed accordingly.
 - o SAIL's quality and efficiency measurements take into account the complexity level of each Medical Center (e.g., patient volume, number of residents and complex clinical program, and research dollars) when assessing performance.
 - o Unlike most other health industry report cards updated annually, SAIL is updated quarterly to allow medical centers to more closely monitor the quality and efficiency of the care delivered to our Veterans.

Industry Example: *Truven Health Analytics***(aka Thompson Reuters) Top Health Systems Study**

Measure:
1. In-Hospital Mortality Index
2. Complications Index
3. Patient Safety Index
4. Inpatient Performance Measure
5. 30-Day Mortality Rate
6. 30-Day Readmission Rate
7. Average Length of Stay
8. HCAHPS Patient Rating of Hospital Performance

HCAHPS: Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems

VA's Value Model Measures in SAIL

Domain	Number of measures	Adapted Model Measure:	Desired Direction of Measure
1. Acute care Mortality	2	In-Hospital risk adjusted mortality (SMR)	Lower
		30-day risk adjusted mortality (SMR30)	Lower
2. Avoidable Adverse Events	3	Risk adjusted complication Index	Lower
		Healthcare associated infections	Lower
		Risk adjusted patient safety index (PSIs)	Lower
3. CMS measures	5	RSMR for CHF and Pneumonia	Lower
		RSRR for AMI, CHF and Pneumonia	Lower
4. Adjusted length of stay	1	Severity adjusted average length of stay (ALOS)	Lower
5. Performance measures	2	Inpatient core measures mean percentage	Higher
		HEDIS outpatient core measure mean percentage	Higher
6. Customer satisfaction	3	HCAHPS score (patient rating of overall hospital performance)	Higher
		Best Places to Work score	Higher
		Registered nurse turnover rate	Lower
7. Efficiency	1	Stochastic frontier analysis (= 1/SFA)	Higher
8. Ambulatory Care Sensitive Condition Hospitalizations	1	ACSC hospitalizations	Lower
9. Access	8	Primary care wait time for new and established patients	Higher
		Specialty care wait time for new and established patients	Higher
		Mental health wait time for new and established patients	Higher
		Call center speed in picking up calls and telephone abandonment rate	Lower

* SAIL's efficiency measure is stochastic frontier analysis (SFA), a widely recognized approach in assessing operational efficiency with quality of care taken into account. The modeling principle is to estimate the optimal cost (given quality of care) after controlling for risks or confounding factors such as hospital characteristics, and separating random factors that are not under managers' control from true managerial inefficiency. Measure lists adapted from *Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning: The SAIL Value Model FY2014 Q1 Updates*.